LANDS AND FORESTS
TECHNICAL NOTE

DEER REPRODUCTION REPORT NOVA SCOTIA—1991

Art Patton

The long awaited deer reproduction recovery occurred in 1991.

Annual fetal counts from does killed on our highways during the 1991 winter and spring showed a substantial increase over last year.

Reproductive data was obtained from 184 does (province-wide), carrying 251 fetuses for an average of 1.36 fetuses per doe. Among the 23 does approaching their first birthday only two fetuses were carried. These does are the fawns that survived the cold, wet spring of last year. They got off to a poor start and will likely continue to be below normal throughout their lifetime. The remaining 151 older known-age does carried an average 1.58 fetuses per doe.

Since we are carrying about equal numbers of does and bucks in our herd, it means that for every 2,000 deer in the province this spring we have added 1,360 fawns. This spring's warm, dry weather improved fawn survival tremendously, and we can expect a very good recruitment to the herd.

As shown in the accompanying tables, Cape Breton showed the highest reproductive rates. There a sample of 58 older known-age does (no fawns) carried 101 fetuses or an average of 1.74 fetuses per doe.

Recovery of reproductive potential is the first step to increasing the deer herd. Barring severe weather or other factors our deer population should show a gradual increase returning to carrying capacity within a very few years.

Table 1. *In Utero* Deer Reproduction, Nova Scotia, 1991.

Doe Age	Number Of Does	Fetus Sex			Total	Fetuses / Doe
		Male	Female	Unknown		
Fawn	23	1	1	0	2	0.09
Yearling	36	24	19	2	45	1.25
2-3	56	42	43	10	95	1.70
3-8	57	48	36	11	95	1.67
8+	2	1	1	2	4	2.00
Unknown	10	5	4	1	10	1.00
Yearling or Older	151	115	99	25	239	1.58
All Ages	184	121	104	26	251	1.36

Table 2. *In Utero* Deer Reproduction, Western Counties, Nova Scotia, 1991.

Doe Age	Number Of Does	Fetus Sex			Total	Fetuses / Doe
		Male	Female	Unknown		
Fawn	9	0	1	0	1	0.11
Yearling	13	11	4	0	15	1.15
2-3	10	9	7	0	16	1.60
3-8	9	5	13	0	18	2.00
Unknown	7	3	1	1	5	0.71
Yearling or Older	32	25	24	0	49	1.53
All Ages	48	28	26	1	55	1.15

Table 3. *In Utero* Deer Reproduction, Eastern Counties, Nova Scotia, 1991.

Doe Age	Number Of Does	Fetus Sex			Total	Fetuses / Doe
		Male	Female	Unknown		
Fawn	5	0	0	0	0	0.00
Yearling	13	7	6	1	14	1.08
2-3	25	13	22	6	41	1.64
3-8	20	10	10	10	30	1.50
8+	2	1	1	2	4	2.00
Unknown	2	1	2	0	3	1.50
Yearling or Older	60	31	39	19	89	1.48
All Ages	67	32	41	19	92	1.37

Table 4. *In Utero* Deer Reproduction, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, 1991.

Doe Age	Number Of Does	Fetus Sex			Total	Fetuses / Doe
		Male	Female	Unknown		
Fawn	9	1	0	0	1	0.11
Yearling	10	6	9	1	16	1.60
2-3	21	20	14	4	38	1.81
3-8	27	33	13	1	47	1.74
Unknown	1	1	1	0	2	2.00
Yearling or Older	58	59	36	6	101	1.74
All Ages	68	61	37	6	104	1.53